"BOMBAY CHRONICLE" KRISHNA RAO AND CHANDRABHAGA FASCINATE THEIR AUDIENCE

In the dreamy atmosphere of the drawing room of Mr.F.S. Mullahis house, lit in Oriental fashion with x brass and clay lamps, and decorated i classical style with cocoanut palms and plantain leaves on Jan.27, a delighted crowd of art lovers listened with rapt attention to a lecture on Indian classical dancing given by Krisrna Rao of Bangalore, an associate of Ram Gopal. The lecture proved an effective appetiser to the dances which followed.

Some persons are good dancers and some good demonstrators; only rarely does one come across someone xxxx who combines both the qualities as does Krishna Rao, who proved his agility and grace in his Natanam Adinar or Dance of Shiva, and his Snake Charmer number. In the Thillana, he was partnered by his wife Chandrabhaga, who matched him in choreographic accomplishment.

Let us hope we have the chance to see more of this clever pair from the South of India. In the picture above they are seen in a Shiva-Parvati pose.

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"MYSINDIA" KRISHNA RAO AND CHANDRABHAGA DEVI

Twenty five years ago a few restless souls heere and there struck a tinder which produced a spart along the length and breadth of the land. Soon after August 1947 it burst into flame, with the result that we Indians now consider ourselves the torch-bearers of an Asian art-revival.

If this self-conscious preening were meant exclusively for the benefit of a world-audience one could ascribe it to an attack of adolescent exhibitionism and leave it at that. But the fire has burrowed so deep that any xxx individual who can perform something beyond the natural functions calls himself an artist.

The Jack-daw complex is nowhere more rife than among the exponents of Indian dancing. Anyone who wears an allegedly ancient costume and struts about a stage striking grotesque attitudes to theaccompaniment of that hybrid cacophony called film music describes himself as a virtuoso of Indian Classical Dancing. When the parentage of his brand of dancing is even more doubtful than usual he simply widens the scope of ambiguity and terms it Oriental Dancing.

This is the background against which the recent dance recital by Mr. and Mrs. U.S.Krishna Rao and party, at the Canara Union New Hall in Malleswaram must be reviewed. To start with, Mr. Krishna Rao, is a virtuoso like Uday Shankar and Ram Gopal, with this all-important difference, that compared to them he is a veritable tyro where showmanship is concerned. Uday Shankar's talent is 80 per cent showmanship and 20 percent art; Ram Gopal's is 20 percent showmanship and 80 percent art. In the case of Krishna Rao it is 60 per cent art and 40 percent expediency. The lot of a trail-blazer is hard in this country, and that of a discoverer of lost trails even harder. That is why Krishna Rao teaches chemistry in a college. The Hydra-headed will swallow only glamour-coated art.

Out of a card of 13 items which he presented at the recital, four were outstanding. His Shiva-parvati Nritya is a time-honoured composition. It is vivid, tempestuous in its effect, and when well handled, awe-inspiring. Krishna Rao and his wife Chandrabhaga Devi lavished their talent upon it and very nearly succeeded in squeezing the last drop of drama out of it. But the lights and the music let them down. Both were too loud.

There is no other number in Krishna Rao's repertoire that can come within a mile of his "Gitopadesam" in sheer gripping power. Its theme is xxxxx one on which generations of Hindus have fed their souls Its emotional appeal runs through the whole scale of human reactions, yet it is one of the ost difficult items to put across, for it needs scrupulous attention to detail. Like Eugene O'Neill's EMPEROR JONES its dynamic explosiveness is brought about by the insistent sound of drums in the background, now low like the echo of a breeze, now fast and furious like the frenzied rattle of machine gun fire. Krishna Rao dances this piece with all the dramatic intensity it requires. His tempo rises like a rocket till it bursts into a blinding shower at the climax. This item alone is worth the price of admission to any show by Krishna Rao, and that is no flattery. He will be doing himself a good turn if he devotes more attention to its window-dressing.

The "Mohini Attam" is such a rarity in its pure form that hundreds of pseudo-versâons flourish. Film stars dance it in translucent skirts and free-wheeling hips. Childrenof eight and nine years of age who know exactly as much about grown-up emotions as the village idiot does about Einsten's Relativity, present it as a series of gyrations and arm-wavings punctuated by spasmodic waggling of eye-brows and pouting of lips. It gave one a pleasant shock therefore to see Chandrabhaga Devi render the Mohini Attam as it should be done, gracefully and orthodoxly and with the correct emphasis on its erotic appeal.

Mr. Krishna Rao has a very promising collection of young girls in his group. All of them obviously know enough of the art to acquit themselves creditably. But they must realise that there is a vast difference between the dance class and the auditorium. As long as the curtainis up they are under a microscope, in a manner of speaking, an to forget that is a mistake which might ruin an item beyond recovery. Also they must remember that a good actor or dancer only appears to be relaxed on stage but in reality is as keyed up as a taut veena string. To let go of a pose before the curtain drops is nothing short of a crime.

Among the five or six youngsters who caught the eye in Mr. Krishna Rao's troupe were Savitri Shahani and Yashodara. Both have charming stage personalities. With a little more experience and a little less hurry they should be able to capitalise on their obvious talent.

It was very stimulating indeed to see that Krishna Rao is not afraid of innovations. His "Thillana" as a duet is a good idea. His weaving of the "Alarippu" into the Shiva-Parvati Nritya was another good one. It is rather dis-piriting to plough a lone urrow, but it is tobe hoped that Krishna Rao will not tire of it and join the ranks of the orchid fanciers. There may be money in it but it is the kind of money that stinks.

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"DECCAN HERALD." CLASSICAL DANCING

Mr. and Mrs. U.S.Krishna Rao and party gave a recital of classical Indian Dancing last Sun ay and Monday evening in the Canara Union New Hall at Malleswaram, in aid of the Bangalore Gymkhana.

An appreciative audience sat through three hours of the programme and it is a measure of its success that the auditorium remained almost as full at the end as t was in the beginnning. This is a welcome sign, for it shows that there are individuals in Bangalore who can derive some enjoyment from classical art.

The programme contained in all13 items among which four were outstanding. The Shiva-Parvati Nrithya in the Durbar of the Gods was imaginatively conceived and spectacularly presented. Krishna Rao's solo number the "Gitopadesha" with its weird accompaniment of drums and its sudden spells of frenzied dancing made a deep impression on the audience. The "Thillana" in Shankarabharana rendered as a dance duet by Krishna Rao and his wife, was a very pleasing innovation. Another piece t at re eived the applause it deserved was Mrs. Krishna Rao "Mohini Attam" interpreted gracefully and in the orthoxox manner.

The young amateurs, all of them gi ls in their teens, who assisted Krishna Rao in the performance danced competently. They are very promising material and one w uld like to see them more often on stage. This applies in particular to Savithri Sahahi who has the build and grace of a dancer, and a very pleasant stage personality.

The costuming and decor onthe wholw ere good. The music was good too, but most of the time was too loud to be enjoyed. This is a point that is too often forgotten.

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